

them with ammunition. And the rest of the army is still more dependent on bases and communications.

(To be continued.)

THE FISHERIES AND THE EARLDOM OF STIRLING.

A protest has been sent to the United States Senate by two of the heirs of the *soi disant* Earl of Stirling against that portion of the treaty, relating to the Nova Scotia fisheries. A similar protest has been served on the department of State during the sitting of the Joint High Commission by Charles L. Alexander, against the consummation of the contemplated treaty, until the rights of himself and family should be recognised and some terms satisfactory to them should be agreed upon. The Stirling claim was a cause celebre and was for years before the Courts and the House of Lords, yet as the facts have no doubt passed out of the memories of those who knew anything of them and have never come to the knowledge of the greater part of a younger generation, it may not be without interest to recall the grounds upon which such a claim as the present is founded. James VI. of Scotland, had a favourite project of colonizing the borders of the Gulph of St. Lawrence, and Sir William Alexander of Menstrie, who warmly entered into his plans was created Earl of Stirling, with succession to heirs male only, and endowed by Royal Charter, with a large territory, including Nova Scotia, and a considerable portion of Canada. The grant included the hereditary vice royalty with almost regal powers, including the right to confer the dignity of Baronets of Nova Scotia upon persons who had paid for and received a grant of 16,000 acres of land. The eldest son of the first Earl, being embarrassed sold his rights in Nova Scotia and in Canada to a French colonist. In 1632 the North American Colonies were ceded to France, but restored in 1713 by the treaty of Utrecht all previous claims having been extinguished. Independent of this however, the claims of the Alexanders had been sold to a French subject. The Earldom of Stirling became extinct, being only transmissible through the heirs male. It is true that a so called Lord Stirling fought on the side of the colonists during the American Revolutionary War, but his claim only rested on his descent through the female line, and was not acknowledged by the House of Lords. In 1824 the claim was revived by Mr. Alexander Humphreys, who first obtained the royal license to assume the name of Alexander on the ground that he had a maternal grandfather of that name. He then proceeded to certify his descent from the first Earl, and maintained by what he had deemed satisfactory proof, that he was the nearest heir and representative of the title. A formal investiture, which anyone at that time could obtain if no opposition were made, took place in Edinburgh Castle. There could be no doubt that the first charter was only to heirs male, but the manner in which documents were produced to set aside objections was, to say the least, extraordinary. In this case a copy of a charter granted by Charles I. in 1639 was found at the proper moment, in which the first charter was renewed with the addition that heirs female as well as heirs male were included in its privileges. In 1825 Mr. Humphreys or Alexander voted as a Scotch peer at the election of the representative peers of Scotland in Holyrood, and as this is an election to which no great interest attaches no one

seems to have objected. At the next election in 1830, some attention had been directed to the pretensions of Mr. Humphreys, and the Earl of Roseberry objected, and the objection was sustained. Mr. Humphreys had been a schoolmaster and in great poverty, but in his claim to the Earldom of Stirling with its large possessions and privileges becoming known, he was able to obtain large advances. He also opened an office in London, for the sale of lands in British North America; issued proclamations styling himself "hereditary lieutenant and lord proprietor of the Province of Nova Scotia," and conferred on his agent a baronetcy and 16,000 acres of land. When Lord Durham was sent there to settle the then existing complaints and disturbances, he protested against the appointment as an infringement on his rights. But at last the Crown lawyers of Scotland challenged the authenticity of his claims, and a trial ensued, in the course of which he utterly failed in the proof of his descent. Here again, the fortunate discovery of a document put him in a position to supply the missing evidence; a box containing a genealogical tree, showing all that was necessary being left at a bookseller's shop in London by the repentant descendant of a thief who had stolen a cash-box years before from the father of the claimant. In this box had been found the genealogical tree which the thief had carefully kept and transmitted to his family as an heirloom! The Court of Session decided against him in spite of the so strangely recovered tree; although even granting that that had been authentic, very much more was wanted to sustain the claim set up by Mr. Humphreys. Still favoured by Providence, other documents came into his possession in a manner equally mysterious as that by which he had obtained the previous evidence exactly at the time it was wanted. Mlle. Le Normand, a fortune teller in Paris had advanced a large sum to Mr. Humphreys, to enable him to prosecute his claims. Two ladies of rank by the most wonderful chance dropped a packet in her rooms. Mlle. Le Normand, who from her profession was not likely to be troubled with many scruples as to opening sealed packets, found in this a letter dated at Versailles signed, "M," declaring the writer's lively interest in the Stirling case. Enclosed was also a large old French map of Canada covered with important and remarkable documents, supplying the evidence wanting, filling up every blank, the trial had shown existed, confirming the exactness of the copy of the Charter of 1639, and containing proof of the authenticity of the tombstone over the body of the great grandfather of Humphreys from whom he had not been able otherwise to show satisfactorily he was descended. Mlle. Le Normand handed these to Mr. Humphreys, and relying on them he returned to Scotland, where, on exhibiting them, he was arrested and tried for forgery. That they were forged admitted of no doubt but, that he was the forger was by no means so certain, and the Scotch verdict of "Not Proven," so far as he was concerned, was returned, the documents themselves being impounded as forgeries, and retained by the Court. This put an end to the case in great Britain, but some years afterwards it was resuscitated in the United States, Mr. Ellwood Fisher, a Quaker lawyer from Virginia, having taken it up at Washington on behalf of Mr. Humphreys. Mr. Fisher was a man of very considerable ability and an influential member of the Calhoun party, having been the author of several able pamphlets on Free Trade, and Southern States rights, and for some time in conjunction with Mr. De

Leon, the United States Consul General in Egypt, the editor of the leading States Rights journal in Washington. Owing to the influence this position gave him he was enabled to have the case repeatedly up before Congress for discussion, it being one of those subjects on which a good deal of harmless talk could be indulged, and as Mr. Fisher gave good dinners, it was said that several of the representatives, were not unwilling to air the claim when nothing of more importance was before the House. There was even a report that President Pierce's administration was willing to treat with Mr. Humphreys and his family for the purchase of their claim in Canada, and Nova Scotia. Mr. Fisher who fully believed in the claim, wrote a powerful appeal on the subject, which was presented to Congress, and we believe engaged Mr. Reverdy Johnson as Counsel in a suit that was contemplated. Very voluminous documents were prepared but nothing ever came of it. Mr. Fisher removed from Washington, and became a partner in the George Law Line of Steamers to Chagres, nobody else could undertake so hopeless a task as the assertion of claims apparently so clearly proved to be unfounded and there need be no doubt of the ratification of the treaty of Washington if these protests are all that stand in the way.

ORIGINALS OF DICKENS' CHARACTERS.

Mrs. Bardwell was a Mrs. Ann Ellis, who kept an eating house near Doctor's Commons; a blustering sergeant Bumpus was the original of Sergeant Buzfuz; and Mr. Justice Stareleigh was a caricature, by no means extravagant, of Sir Stephen Gaselee. Mr. Fang Truculent Bow street, magistrate in "Oliver Twist," was a faithful portrait of Mr. Laing a London police magistrate whose conduct had long been a subject of bitter criticism in the newspapers. "Oliver Twist" caused his removal. Traddles is said to have been Sir T. N. Talford. Esther Summerson, a Miss Sophia Iselin, sister in law of Moxon the publisher; and Detective Bucket, the well known Inspector Field, with whom Dickens made several interesting tours of observation. In "Dombey and son," several characters are said to be drawn from nature. Mr. Dombey is supposed to represent Mr. Thomas Chapman, ship owner whose offices were opposite the Wooden Midshipman. As if to make Mr. Chapman undoubtedly identical with Dombey we have, as messenger of the commercial house of "Dombey and Son," one Perch actually taken from a little old chap named Stephen Hale, who was part clerk part messenger in Mr. Chapman's office. Old Sol Gills was intended for a little fellow named Norle, who kept a very small shop in Leadenhall street exactly opposite the office of John Chapman & Co. Captain Cuttle was one David Mainland, master of a merchantman.

REVIEWS.

The *Westminster Review* for April has been received from the Leonard Scott Publishing Company of New York. It contains an elaborate article on the career and writings of St. Beuve, from the pen of our townsman, P. LeSeur, Esq. It speaks highly for the literary ability of the writer, and as a piece of criticism it would do honor to a veteran reviewer.